

and tearing down the Berlin wall, none of these milestones in our history was accomplished by one particular political party. They are a result of public servants coming together to solve the great challenges of our time.

This is the challenge that lies before us: we must find a way to come together to make meaningful progress for the American people.

PEOPLE NEED BETTER HEALTH CARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, President Trump and Speaker RYAN have said that the Affordable Care Act that we have now is a disaster, that it is a calamity.

There are problems with it. For some people in some plans, premiums are too high.

So what do the Republicans want to do?

Raise the premiums.

For some people in some plans, deductibles are too high.

So what do the Republicans want to do?

Make the deductibles much higher.

Let's get away from the rhetoric about the Affordable Care Act and look at what the Republicans plan to do with the bill that we are going to be voting on presumably in the next few days: raise the premiums, raise the deductibles.

They say that you will not be disqualified for preexisting conditions and that you will still be able to get insurance, but not if you let your coverage lapse in 6 months. If you are laid off from your job and you lose your insurance and 6 months later you get insurance, no, you are going to have to pay a 30 percent higher premium in order to get coverage. So their guarantee is worth nothing.

What does the bill that we are going to be voting on do?

This bill would throw 24 million people off of coverage. Twenty four million Americans would lose their health care, the security of mind that they have now. This bill would destroy about 2 million jobs. This bill would force families to pay higher costs, higher premiums, higher deductibles.

The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office estimates that a 50- or 60-year-old person making \$26,000 and who, under ObamaCare, is paying, after the subsidies, out of pocket \$1,700 a year for health insurance, will, under this new Republican bill, after the appropriate subsidies that this bill will give, pay not \$1,700, but \$14,000 on a pretax income of \$26,000.

So this bill will increase costs, throw 24 million people off of coverage, and impose an age tax. People above 50 years old will have to pay five times as much as younger people for insurance, a very crushing age tax.

Why? Why do this?

Because they say people need more freedom to choose their health care.

People don't need more freedom to choose their health care. People need better health care. They need coverage. They need security. They need coverage that will take care of their health needs at a low cost. That is what they need.

The ObamaCare, the existing bill that we have, the Affordable Care Act, gives them that, not as well as it should. We should make improvements to it. It is not an improvement to throw 24 million people off of coverage, increase the cost, and institute a crushing age tax.

Why?

It is to give a tax benefit of \$2.8 billion to the richest 400 families in the United States. This bill would be the largest transfer of wealth from low- and mostly middle-income people to the top 1 percent in American history.

Let me just address one last thing. People are being bribed to vote for this bill. People are being bribed legally. Provisions are being put in the bill to say: Hey, if you vote for this bill, you will benefit, your State will benefit.

Okay. There is nothing wrong with that. It has been done before.

Let's take a look at one of those bribes, the so-called New York bribe. New York, along with 15 other States, takes advantage or utilizes a provision in the law that has been in the law since 1965 in Medicaid in which the State share of Medicaid is borne partially by the State and partially by local governments. Sixteen States have elected to do that.

This bill says that New York State only will be prohibited from sharing the burden of Medicaid with local governments. So \$2.3 billion will be shifted from various local governments onto the State's taxpayers, except for New York City. Upstate counties will lose their share. New York City will have to keep it. The State will have to bear the burden. So it is a \$2.3 billion increase for State taxpayers.

Now, eight Republicans, we are told, from upstate New York are going to vote for this bill just because of that. They don't like the bill in other respects, but because of that provision, which will relieve some of the burden from local counties, they are going to vote for the bill; and they say so. Representative COLLINS of New York said so. He would vote for that bill. He got a number of other people to agree. That is why the provision is in the bill.

Okay. But it is not going to happen. It is flatly unconstitutional. They are selling their votes for something that is never going to happen, and that is just wrong. This bill should not be approved. It is a sellout to the people of the entire country.

BUILD ON AFFORDABLE COVERAGE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. CASTOR) for 5 minutes.

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I am here today on the floor of the House to speak out on behalf of my neighbors back home in the State of Florida. I represent a district in the Tampa Bay area. Let me tell you, they are very concerned about the impact of this Republican healthcare bill.

What we know about the bill so far, based upon the report of the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, is that the Republican bill will rip coverage away from at least 24 million Americans. This is at a time when we have made such progress since the adoption of the Affordable Care Act.

Under the Affordable Care Act, about 20 million Americans have gained coverage, including about 1.7 million of my neighbors in Florida that went shopping on healthcare.gov and found an affordable option.

The Republican bill would take us backwards. It would also impose huge cost increases on everyone. Let me tell you, most people in America have their insurance through their employer. And under the Affordable Care Act—it hasn't been perfect—what we have seen in the State of Florida between the years 2010 and 2015 is the rate of increase for my neighbors who have their insurance through their jobs has been kept in check. The rate of increase has only been 1.3 percent. Before the adoption of the Affordable Care Act, the rate of increase was well over 8 percent.

Why is this happening?

If you have insurance through your job, you want other people to have insurance coverage. That is very important because, if more Americans don't have insurance coverage, they show up in the emergency room and that cost is passed along to those who have coverage or those on Medicare, or the hospital has to take on bad debt, or local governments have to raise taxes to cover that care.

Under this Republican bill, hold on to your wallet because that insurance coverage now will be unaffordable for millions of more Americans. If you have insurance through your job, like most people do, you are now going to end up picking up the cost of people that can no longer afford coverage.

If you are a little bit older, easing into Medicare—maybe you are 50 to 64—hold on to your wallet. There is a huge age tax in this Republican bill.

I will give you an example from a neighbor of mine back home. Her name is Kathy Palmer. She lives in Tampa. She works two part-time jobs. She works for an accountant. It is a small business. They cannot afford to provide insurance through their small business. She is also working to get her degree in accountancy from the University of South Florida. Kathy has two part-time jobs. She is age 60. She is going to school to get a degree. She has a teenager in high school. She couldn't afford insurance coverage before the Affordable Care Act. When the Affordable Care Act was adopted, she could go

shopping on healthcare.gov and get some tax credit help to help afford coverage.

Here is what happened to Kathy in December. She had heart pains. She thought she was having a heart attack. She went to the emergency room of one of our great local hospitals. Thank goodness, she did not have a heart attack.

Kathy almost had a heart attack, however, when she got the hospital bill later. The hospital bill was \$70,000. That would bankrupt her. Fortunately, she had coverage through the Affordable Care Act at healthcare.gov, and ultimately what she paid on that hospital bill was only \$179.

This story is repeated over and over again, and I simply do not understand why my Republican colleagues think it is wise to make coverage unaffordable and increase cost on all Americans.

Mr. Speaker, the other part of this bill that is kind of flying under the radar, but is quite insidious and rather unconscionable is the hatchet it takes to the 50-year guarantee that is provided to Americans under Medicaid.

Medicaid serves our neighbors with Alzheimer's. It pays about two-thirds of the cost of long-term care and skilled nursing, the cost of care for the disabled, many children, many pregnant women. It has been the law for about 50 years to ensure that, in the United States of America, if you have a child born with a complex medical condition or you have a parent or grandparent that has to go into a nursing home, that your family is not going to be impoverished. That is a valued decision we made 50 years ago.

In this bill, the Republican leadership intends to go back on our values and pull the rug out from under our families who rely on Medicaid services. They say: Oh, the States will be able to do this. The States will have all the flexibility in the world.

Well, flexibility is a canard for they are going to have less, and we are going to ration care.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my Republican colleagues to pull this bill, to build on affordable coverage, to build on the cost savings that we have made and the progress we have made for these families.

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HEALTH CARE OUGHT TO BE A RIGHT AND NOT A PRIVILEGE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, let me thank you for giving me the opportunity to once again express my opposition to the repeal-and-replace healthcare bill before us.

You know, it is my position that health care ought to be a right and not a privilege, especially in a country where we have the skill, the knowledge, and the technology to provide it.

Medicare and Medicaid opened up new opportunities for health care for seniors and large numbers of low-income, poor people in this country in the mid-1960s. As a matter of fact, before Medicaid and Medicare, some of them had never ever been able to acquire any professional medical help. As a matter of fact, they lived off remedies and concoctions and things that they had learned how to put together.

Now we come along with some help—Medicare, Medicaid—and the next big move was the Affordable Care Act, which was a long time coming, but it helped us move to the point where more than 20 million people were able to get health insurance who had never had it before, whose only outlet was to go to the emergency room of public hospitals and oftentimes sit sometimes for 2 or 3 days before they got service, before they got attention.

Now, here we come with something talking about repealing it, taking it away. How could we possibly want to go backwards, back to where millions of people are wondering every day whether or not they are going to be able to go to the doctor and get serviced if they are sick?

And so I say to my colleagues, especially those who have never had the experience of knowing hundreds of people with no care like I have, let's say: No, no, no. Forward ever, backwards never.

DON'T WALK THE PLANK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, it was 7 years ago today that the Affordable Care Act passed and changed the lives of so many millions of Americans who previously couldn't get health care. But I think we knew even at the time that a big bill like this, a transformative piece of legislation like this, over time would require some changes, just as Social Security and Medicare have done.

The truth of the matter is, for 7 years, as we heard Republicans complaining about what was happening, we said: Let's sit down together, as Members of Congress, representatives of the people, and fix what we have got and build on the things that have made it possible for all these millions of people to have not only health care, but better health care.

Instead, what we heard over and over again is: Repeal ObamaCare; repeal ObamaCare. And I kind of feel like today what we have is, because they said that, then they feel like they have to fulfill a promise. But if you look at what they are offering, it really hurts so many Americans.

What I hope the American people will understand is that the so-called repeal-and-replace bill raises the cost of premiums and out-of-pocket costs. People are going to pay more and get less.

Twenty-four million people—that is just a start; it ends up being some 50

million people after some years—will lose their coverage altogether.

It represents the single largest transfer of wealth to the top richest Americans and corporations. We are talking about \$600 billion in tax relief. There is not a lot of talk about that. In many ways, this is a tax cut for the richest being masked as a healthcare bill.

Finally, I want to really focus in on what we call the age tax. Well, before I was a senior citizen myself, I have worked with older Americans in the State of Illinois, where I am from, and here in Congress as well.

So what is this age tax? This bill says that people who are between the age of 50—not very old—and 64, in other words, pre-Medicare, will be allowed to be charged five times more than young people for their health care. Actually, it allows the States even to go more than five times more for their health care. It will lower the subsidies.

As has been said many times, here is just an example. If you are 64 years old with an income of around \$26,500—which, by the way, is the median income for people that age, certainly not a wealthy person—you would pay, under this bill, the Republican bill, \$14,600 for premiums—think of that—as compared to \$1,700 today, an increase of \$12,900. So it is not surprising that the Congressional Budget Office predicts that many of those people will simply have to give up their health care.

The reason they want to charge them more is to entice younger people, who will then pay lower premiums, to actually get on the program. We are all for that. We want to make sure that young people get on. But people who are 50 to 64 are very likely, or more likely than young people, to have healthcare issues.

It is absolutely no wonder that so many organizations and forces are lining up in the United States to oppose this bill:

The American Medical Association, the doctors, and all the different subgroups of doctors, have written letters saying no to this repeal-and-replace.

The American Hospital Association, not only urban hospitals and hospitals in medically underserved areas, rural hospitals could go under.

The AARP, 35 million members strong, is absolutely dead set—they are running ads; some people may have seen them on television—against this legislation.

The American Nurses Association, conservative think tanks are against it, and many Members of Congress are against it—and for good reason. One of our Republican Senators said to House Republicans: Don't walk the plank.

I would suggest they take that advice and vote “no.”

KEEPING PROMISES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GAETZ) for 5 minutes.